

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.



Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee

Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus

Contact: Deanna Maher (313) 961-5670

Cell: (313) 737-7944

Ted Kalo, Judiciary Committee
(202) 225-6906

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 23, 2002

CONYERS QUESTIONS DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION ON USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

Detroit, MI - Congressman John Conyers, Jr. has requested an immediate investigation by the head of the Drug Enforcement Agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, Asa Hutchinson, of DEA's possible misuse of federal funds without proper authorization by Congress and in contravention of existing law..

Conyers said: "It appears that the DEA has been actively engaged across the country in collaboration with groups who are opposed to ballot proposals involving reform of our drug laws. Michigan is one of the states which will have a proposal of this kind on its November ballot. Citizens opposed to this kind of ballot initiative clearly are permitted to campaign and lobby in support of their point of view in an effort to win public support for their position. This is what our democracy is all about. But it is far from clear whether federally funded agencies and their employees can be used to spread a message or promote a campaign for or against a ballot initiative, on federal property and on government time."

"The use of our local DEA office by those opposed to the Drug Reform ballot initiative seems clearly in violation of Section 601 of Public Law 107-77 (November 28, 2001), which clearly states that no part of any appropriation for DEA can be used for 'publicity or propaganda purposes' not authorized by Congress".

"I am concerned that DEA has actively been involved in a campaign, both locally and nationally, to oppose drug reform proposals which have been properly and legally put before the citizens of this state for their approval or rejection. There seems little doubt that the appropriations for DEA are specifically prohibited from being used for this purpose. This apparently unlawful involvement of the DEA to promote a political agenda must cease immediately. We cannot allow the integrity of our national government to be compromised for any purpose, regardless of the intent of these over zealous federal activists. I am shocked that judges in violation of their Canon of Ethics would participate as well."